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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 000668

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [MOPS](#) [AF](#) [IT](#) [EUN](#) [AFGHANISTAN](#)

SUBJECT: MFA U/S BONIVER ON AFGHANISTAN: PRT, RESPONSE TO
GAERC, BERLIN CONFERENCE, ELECTIONS

REF: A. STATE 34712

[1](#)B. USNATO 144

[1](#)C. ROME 640

[1](#)D. 03 ROME 4155

Classified By: DCM EMIL SKODON, REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: In a February 20 meeting with Charge, MFA U/S Boniver conveyed the GOI's irritation at the USG's last-minute request that Italy lead a PRT in Afghanistan somewhere other than Ghazni, despite months of planning prompted by a specific U.S. request. She said Italy hoped to maintain economic contributions to Afghanistan at the same level -- around 45-50 million Euro -- annually for the next three years. She expressed "theoretical" satisfaction with progress on judicial reform in Afghanistan, given the fact that no semblance of a judicial system exists in Afghanistan as a base. Finally, she suggested that parliamentary elections might need to be postponed, but the international community must strengthen and support the Karzai administration. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) Charge, accompanied by Poloffs, called on MFA U/S for Asia and Human Rights Margherita Boniver February 20 to deliver Ref A GAERC demarche and discuss Afghanistan prior to the spring Berlin conference. Somewhat more mildly than we had expected, Boniver conveyed the GOI's "embarrassment" and irritation at the last-minute request by the USG that Italy switch gears to lead a PRT in Afghanistan in a place other than Ghazni. Months of careful planning had gone into making the Ghazni PRT possible, she pointed out, at the USG's specific request. Charge explained the new security analysis that made the change advisable, assured Boniver that the change had nothing to do with Italy or our confidence in Italy's capabilities, and acknowledged the inconvenience the abrupt change had caused GOI officials. Boniver let the matter drop, saying Italy was now beginning to consider which new location it would assume, and by March 31 in Berlin, she hoped to be able to announce where.

[1](#)3. (C) Charge shared points in Ref A GAERC demarche (previously shared with the MFA, Ref C), expressed appreciation for Italy's contributions to Afghanistan, and asked for GOI assistance in doing not only what it could, but also in urging other nations to do as much as possible to help the Afghans meet budgetary needs. He noted the expected U.S. one billion dollar pledge. Boniver said Italy hoped to be able to make its own three-year pledge, with contributions remaining on the current scale of 45-50 million Euro/year. (Her Chief of Staff emphasized that Italy's annual contributions were closer to 45-47 million Euro/year than to [1](#)50. Italy pledged 47.3 million Euro at Tokyo, and has exceeded that pledge in recent disbursements (see Ref D).) Boniver stated this was in addition to expenses associated with Italy's role as lead nation for Afghan judicial reform. (NOTE: According to figures from the MFA's Development Directorate General, Italy's pledges include money toward judicial reform efforts.) Boniver will lead the Italian delegation to the Berlin conference.

[1](#)4. (C) Responding to Charge's inquiry, Boniver said that from a "theoretical point of view," Italian-led efforts toward judicial reform in Afghanistan were going very well. Judge Di Gennaro has worked extremely well and has completed a new condensed version of an Afghan penal code that awaits only Karzai's approval. Her satisfaction had to be "theoretical," she explained, because nothing existed in Afghanistan in terms of judicial infrastructure on which the Italian efforts could build. Nothing resembled democratic judicial fixtures; there were no codes, no prisons, no judges. Training will begin on February 21 of the first of some 450 Afghan judicial officials (lawyers and judges) to be trained over the next two months. This would also be supervised by Di Gennaro. Training will occur in Rome and Turin.

[1](#)5. (C) Boniver shared her thoughts on the timetable for Afghan elections, noting it would require thorough discussion in Berlin. Presidential elections are "absolutely necessary and fantastic," she said. But perhaps "we will need to procrastinate a bit" on legislative elections. If only eight percent of the population is registered to vote, that is not enough. Regardless, the international community must continue to strengthen President Karzai and his

administration.

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